As chairman of the bipartisan Friends of Ireland Caucus here in the House, I believe this is a vital program in support of the Northern Ireland peace process; and I thank the committee for their prompt consideration.

Imagine a program where young people are able to leave Irish neighborhoods of hardship and strife to experience life in a multicultural, multireligious, and diverse Nation. Upon return, they share what they have learned with their peers and build a better life for themselves and their families, a life of greater acceptance of difference without hate. This was the idea of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program, which began in 1998.

The original legislation, H.R. 4293, creates 12,000 3-year nonimmigrant visas, Q classification, for adults between the ages of 18 and 35 who live in disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. It aims to assist the region in its transition to a peacetime economy. As a low-cost, low-risk, high-return investment in peace, it affords people an opportunity to obtain valuable job skills and the experience of working in the world's greatest economy. After their visit, they return home to provide the crucial skill base needed to attract private investment in their local communities.

Signed into law by President Clinton on October 30, 1998, the legislation directs the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to establish a program for young people who are residents of these areas to, quote, ''develop job skills and conflict resolution abilities.''

Since its inception, this program has already allowed about 500 young people ages 18 to 35 to immerse themselves in the culture in United States hub cities, including Colorado Springs; Washington, D.C.; Boston; Pittsburgh; and, most recently, my home, Syracuse. When the program was created, the Congress had no idea how many visas would be required. We had no accurate way to gauge interest among young people in those areas. However, the program is working; and I am anxiously awaiting a review by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department next spring when the first group of participants return to their home country.

Mr. Speaker, current regulations state that INS may only admit 4,000 aliens per year under this program for a maximum of 36 months and only during the years 2000, 2001, and 2002. This legislation would simply allow another group of participants in fiscal year 2003 to obtain a 3-year Q–2 visa and enter into the program. This is understood by the State Department as well as the Ireland and Northern Ireland governments. If approved, they are expecting about 250 additional visas will be issued next year.

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Mr. Speaker, whenever Members of Congress visit Ireland and Northern Ireland, we are thanked for the support Congress has given to the peace process and reminded of the need to maintain our involvement. We have seen first-hand benefits of private and public investment in these distressed areas that have suffered the most from the violence over the last 30 years.

The peace process in Northern Ireland is a great story, but it is an ongoing story and needs leadership from within and support from outside. This program is part of our ongoing commitment to a process that would have been impossible without U.S. involvement.

The visa program will leverage existing and future private investment at a time of fiscal austerity. This program is a relatively inexpensive way to promote peace, reconciliation and stability. I believe this program serves as a model for future efforts to bring peace and resolve conflicts in other hot spots around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of H.R. 4558.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 4558 an extension of the Irish Peace Process Cultural Training program sponsored by my friend and colleague the gentleman from New York. Mr. WALSH, who chairs the Congressional Friends of Ireland.

Today, in the north of Ireland the institutions established by the Good Friday Accord are up and running. They are serving the people very well in a shared governance scheme supported by the two governments in the region, by our nation, and most of the people in both the north and south.

Now that we have changed their means of governance, we must also help change hearts and minds in the long divided Irish society, where sadly some elements of sectarianism still exist.

During this past summer we witnessed nearly nightly violence in some of the interfaced areas in the inner city of Belfast, where some Catholics and Protestants have yet to learn to live together side by side.

Mr. Walsh's plan, extended by H.R. 4558, has provided for young people from the north and the border counties in the south to come to our nation. Here they can learn new skills and at the same time also learn to live and work together in peace and harmony in multicultural societies, such as ours.

These new job skills and cultural experiences that they learn here and take back to Ireland, are just what Northern Ireland needs today.

While the shared governance scheme has changed the institutions, we also must help change mind sets and develop new outlooks and opportunities for the young people of the region. Mr. Walsh's program meets those two vital needs, and is a long term and insightful solution for what next needs to be done in Northern Ireland.

On a recent Codel to Ireland, I am informed, the Walsh visa program won high praise from some members of the Irish Dail and the Northern Ireland assembly. These are people on the ground who know the challenges and what can and needs to be done by our nation to cement the peace.

I urge all of our colleagues who are for the future of Northern Ireland and especially its young people to vote for H.R. 4558. It is yet another commitment from our nation to the people of Northern Ireland, especially the young, who are its future.

There is no turning back from the Good Friday accord as the important and well meaning IRA apology of last week made clear. We are at the dawn of a new beginning in that long troubled region. H.R. 4558 is a vital part of our contribution to that new and hopeful future, and I urge its adoption.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4558.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHILD STATUS PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1209) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to determine whether an alien is a child, for purposes of classification as an immediate relative, based on the age of the alien on the date the classification petition with respect to the alien is filed, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Status Protection Act''.

SEC. 2. USE OF AGE ON PETITION FILING DATE, PARENT'S NATURALIZATION DATE, OR MARRIAGE TERMINATION DATE, IN DETERMINING STATUS AS IMMEDIATE RELATIVE.

Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1151) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(f) RULES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER CERTAIN ALIENS ARE IMMEDIATE RELATIVES.—

''(1) AGE ON PETITION FILING DATE.—Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), for purposes of subsection (b)(2)(A)(i), a determination of whether an alien satisfies the age requirement in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of section 101(b)(1) shall be made using the age of the alien on the date on which the petition is filed with the Attorney General under section 204 to classify the alien as an immediate relative under subsection (b)(2)(A)(i).

''(2) AGE ON PARENT'S NATURALIZATION DATE.—In the case of a petition under section 204 initially filed for an alien child's classification as a family-sponsored immigrant under section 203(a)(2)(A), based on the child's parent being lawfully admitted for permanent residence, if the petition is later converted, due to the naturalization of the parent, to a petition to classify the alien as an immediate relative under subsection (b)(2)(A)(i), the determination described in paragraph (1) shall be made using the

age of the alien on the date of the parent's naturalization.

''(3) AGE ON MARRIAGE TERMINATION DATE.—In the case of a petition under section 204 initially filed for an alien's classification as a family-sponsored immigrant under section 203(a)(3), based on the alien's being a married son or daughter of a citizen, if the petition is later converted, due to the legal termination of the alien's marriage, to a petition to classify the alien as an immediate relative under subsection (b)(2)(A)(i) or as an unmarried son or daughter of a citizen under section 203(a)(1), the determination described in paragraph (1) shall be made using the age of the alien on the date of the termination of the marriage.''.

SEC. 3. TREATMENT OF CERTAIN UNMARRIED SONS AND DAUGHTERS SEEKING STATUS AS FAMILY-SPONSORED, EMPLOYMENT-BASED, AND DIVERSITY IMMIGRANTS.

Section 203 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1153) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) RULES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER CERTAIN ALIENS ARE CHILDREN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subsections (a)(2)(A) and (d), a determination of whether an alien satisfies the age requirement in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of section 101(b)(1) shall be made using—

''(A) the age of the alien on the date on which an immigrant visa number becomes available for such alien (or, in the case of subsection (d), the date on which an immigrant visa number became available for the alien's parent), but only if the alien has sought to acquire the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence within one year of such availability; reduced by

''(B) the number of days in the period during which the applicable petition described in paragraph (2) was pending.

''(2) PETITIONS DESCRIBED.—The petition described in this paragraph is—

''(A) with respect to a relationship described in subsection (a)(2)(A), a petition filed under section 204 for classification of an alien child under subsection (a)(2)(A); or

''(B) with respect to an alien child who is a derivative beneficiary under subsection (d), a petition filed under section 204 for classification of the alien's parent under subsection (a), (b), or (c).

''(3) RETENTION OF PRIORITY DATE.—If the age of an alien is determined under paragraph (1) to be 21 years of age or older for the purposes of subsections (a)(2)(A) and (d), the alien's petition shall automatically be converted to the appropriate category and the alien shall retain the original priority date issued upon receipt of the original petition.''.

SEC. 4. USE OF AGE ON PARENT'S APPLICATION FILING DATE IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR ASYLUM.

Section 208(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1158(b)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

''(3) TREATMENT OF SPOUSE AND CHILDREN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A spouse or child (as defined in section 101(b)(1) (A), (B), (C), (D), or (E)) of an alien who is granted asylum under this subsection may, if not otherwise eligible for asylum under this section, be granted the same status as the alien if accompanying, or following to join, such alien.

''(B) CONTINUED CLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN ALIENS AS CHILDREN.—An unmarried alien who seeks to accompany, or follow to join, a parent granted asylum under this subsection, and who was under 21 years of age on the date on which such parent applied for asylum under this section, shall continue to be classified as a child for purposes of this paragraph and section 209(b)(3), if the alien attained 21 years of age after such application was filed but while it was pending.''.

SEC. 5. USE OF AGE ON PARENT'S APPLICATION FILING DATE IN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR ADMISSION AS REFUGEE.

Section 207(c)(2) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1157(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''(2)'' and inserting ''(2)(A)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) An unmarried alien who seeks to accompany, or follow to join, a parent granted admission as a refugee under this subsection, and who was under 21 years of age on the date on which such parent applied for refugee status under this section, shall continue to be classified as a child for purposes of this paragraph, if the alien attained 21 years of age after such application was filed but while it was pending.''.

SEC. 6. TREATMENT OF CLASSIFICATION PETITIONS FOR UNMARRIED SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF NATURALIZED CITIZENS.

Section 204 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) PROCEDURES FOR UNMARRIED SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF CITIZENS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), in the case of a petition under this section initially filed for an alien unmarried son or daughter's classification as a family-sponsored immigrant under section 203(a)(2)(B), based on a parent of the son or daughter being an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence, if such parent subsequently becomes a naturalized citizen of the United States, such petition shall be converted to a petition to classify the unmarried son or daughter as a family-sponsored immigrant under section 203(a)(1).

''(2) EXCEPTION.—Paragraph (1) does not apply if the son or daughter files with the Attorney General a written statement that he or she elects not to have such conversion occur (or if it has occurred, to have such conversion revoked). Where such an election has been made, any determination with respect to the son or daughter's eligibility for admission as a family-sponsored immigrant shall be made as if such naturalization had not taken place.

''(3) PRIORITY DATE.—Regardless of whether a petition is converted under this subsection or not, if an unmarried son or daughter described in this subsection was assigned a priority date with respect to such petition before such naturalization, he or she may maintain that priority date.

''(4) CLARIFICATION.—This subsection shall apply to a petition if it is properly filed, regardless of whether it was approved or not before such naturalization.''.

SEC. 7. IMMIGRATION BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN ALIEN CHILDREN NOT AFFECTED.

Section 204(a)(1)(D) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154(a)(1)(D)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

''(iii) Nothing in the amendments made by the Child Status Protection Act shall be construed to limit or deny any right or benefit provided under this subparagraph.''.

SEC. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply to any alien who is a derivative beneficiary or any other beneficiary of—

(1) a petition for classification under section 204 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) approved before such date but only if a final determination has not been made on the beneficiary's application for an immigrant visa or adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence pursuant to such approved petition;

(2) a petition for classification under section 204 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1154) pending on or after such date; or

(3) an application pending before the Department of Justice or the Department of State on or after such date.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1209.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1209, the Child Status Protection Act, is the good work of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims chairman, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE.) It passed the House by a vote of 416 to 0 in June of 2001. Today we take up the bill as amended by the Senate.

Aliens residing in the United States who are eligible for permanent resident status may adjust their status with the INS. However, INS processing delays have caused up to a 3-year delay for adjustment. For alien children of U.S. citizens, this delay in processing can have serious consequences, for once they turn 21 years of age they lose their immediate relative status. An unlimited number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens can receive green cards every year. However, there are a limited number of green cards available for the adult children of citizens.

If a U.S. citizen parent petitions for a green card for a child before the child turns 21 but the INS does not get around to processing the adjustment of status application until after the child turns 21, the family is out of luck. The child goes to the end of the long waiting list. The child is being punished because of INS ineptitude, which we have heard much about, and it is not right. H.R. 1209 corrects this outcome by providing that a child shall remain eligible for immediate relative status as long as an immigrant visa petition was filed for him or her before turning age 21.

The Senate passed H.R. 1209 with a few appropriate additions, and the motion today is to concur in those additions. The Senate bill addresses three other situations where alien children lose immigration benefits by ''aging out'' as a result of INS processing delays.

Case number one: Children of permanent residents. Under current law, when a child of a permanent resident turns 21, he or she goes from the second preference A waiting list to the second waiting list B waiting list, which is much longer.

Case number two: Children of family and employer-sponsored immigrants

and diversity lottery winners. Under current law, when an alien receives permanent residence as a preference visa recipient or a winner of the diversity lottery, a minor child receives permanent residence at the same time. After the child turns 21, the parent would have to apply for the child to be put on the second preference B waiting list.

Case number three: Children of asylees and refugees. Under current law, when an alien receives asylum or is granted refugee status, a minor child receives permanent residence at the same time as the parent. After the child turns 21, the parent would have to apply for him or her to be put on the second preference B waiting list.

The Senate amendment also fixes a troubling anomaly in our immigration laws. Under current law, when a permanent resident naturalizes who has sponsored adult sons and daughters for preferential visas, they move from the second preference B category to the first preference category. Normally, the wait for a first preference visa is much shorter than the wait for second preference B visa. However, currently this is not the case for sons and daughters of immigrants from the Philippines. For complicated factors, the line actually gets longer for sons and daughters when the parent naturalizes. Immigrants are in effect being penalized for becoming citizens, and we don't want that.

The Senate amendment provides a simple fix by allowing an adult son or daughter to decline to be transferred from the second preference B category to the first preference category when a parent naturalizes.

This bill is a fine example of how we and the other body can work together in a collaborative fashion. Bringing families together is a prime goal of our immigration system. H.R. 1209 facilitates and hastens the reuniting of legal immigrants' families. It is family-friendly legislation that is in keeping with our proud traditions. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) will control the time.

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your kindness, and I might also acknowledge the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) for his kindness. Traveling sometimes causes one to be delayed.

Mr. Speaker, let me rise to support what I think is a very special and important piece of legislation that has come about from the Committee on the Judiciary in a bipartisan manner, the Child Status Protection Act of 2001, H.R. 1209.

I would ask my colleagues to enthusiastically support this legislation, which was originally cosponsored by the subcommittee chairman, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), and myself, and it is a culmination of a bipartisan agreement of both the House and the Senate that addresses the status of unmarried children of U.S. citizens who turn 21 while in the process of having an immigrant visa petition adjudicated. The age and marital status of the offspring of U.S. citizens determine whether they are eligible for immigrant status as an immediate relative or under the family-first preference category.

As has been noted throughout our debates on the floor of the House, we are interested in and encouraged by the interest of immigrants in this country to access legalization, to become American citizens, to be part of the great values and the great beliefs of this Nation.

H.R. 1209 would protect the status of children of United States citizens who ''age out'' while awaiting the processing and adjudication of immediate relative petitions.

The child of a U.S. citizen is eligible for admission as an immediate relative. Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are not subject to any numerical restrictions. That is, visas are immediately available to them under the statute, subject only to the processing time required to adjudicate the immediate relative visa petition.

Obviously, the parent and child relationship is very important. The benefits that come from the parent-child relationship or relative relationship is very important, the ability to be able to go to school, to a place of higher education, to receive other governmental benefits. Thus, the only wait that such children are required to endure is the time it takes to process their paperwork. We want to see that completed.

Under current law, once children reach the age of 21 and above, they are no longer considered immediate relatives under the INA. That means that they ''age out.'' Thus, instead of being entitled to admission without numerical limitation, the U.S. citizen's sons or daughters are placed in the back of the line for one of the INS's backlogged family preference categories of immigrants. That means they have already been standing in line for maybe 2, 3, 4 years. They may have been 17 or 16 or 19, and they have then aged out. By putting them behind a long list of individuals then complicates further the situation of the benefits that they might receive and also the relationship being established as an American citizen.

This can be particularly difficult when there are just over 23,000 family-first preference visas available each year to the adult unmarried sons and daughters of citizens, many of whom are coming over to the country for the first time. Some of these that will be impacted by this law are already here waiting to access citizenship. The waiting list at times has been in excess of over 90,000 people. It is not uncommon for people to wait on this waiting list for 4 years.

The Senate expanded this bill to cover other situations where alien children lose immigration benefits by aging out as a result of INS processing delays. The Senate amendment expands age-out protection to cover the following:

Children of permanent residents. Under current law, there is a group that is waiting in permanent residence, and we have expanded that. Children of family and employer-sponsored immigrants and diversity lottery winners, which allows those who are under visas such as H1(b), which is very helpful. Children of asylees and refugees. Under current law, when an alien receives asylum or is granted refugee status, a minor child receives permanent residence at the same time as the parent. After the child turns 21, the parent would have to apply for him or her to be put on the second preference B waiting list.

I have a dilemma in my own district with where a family of nine is now in detention because the only citizen they have in their family is a 9-year-old child, which shows that, in many instances, sometimes there are difficulties in families, good families, trying to access legalization. This family has been in the country for 9 years. This legislation does not apply to that, but it shows that where we can correct situations to bring families together, this is extremely important.

So the Senate has brought about an opportunity to correct or expand upon what was not done in the House. I believe this is an important bill that helps those who are aging out and brings families together. I hope my colleagues will support this legislation enthusiastically.

Mr. Speaker, ''The Child Status Protection Act'' we are considering today, originally sponsored by Subcommittee Chairman GEORGE GEKAS and myself, is the culmination of a bipartisan agreement of both the House and the Senate, that addresses the status of unmarried children of U.S. citizens who turn 21 while in the process of having an immigrant visa petition adjudicated. The age and marital status of the offspring of U.S. citizens determine whether they are eligible for immigrant status as ''immediate relatives'' or under the ''family first preference category''.

H.R. 1209 would protect the status of children of United States citizens who ''age-out'' while awaiting the processing and adjudication of immediate relative petitions.

The ''child'' of a U.S. citizen is eligible for admission as an ''immediate relative.'' ''Immediate relatives'' of U.S. citizens are not subject to any numerical restrictions. That is, visas are immediately available to them under the statute, subject only to the processing time required to adjudicate the immediate relative visa petition. Thus, the only wait that such children are required to endure is the time it takes to process their paperwork.

Under current law once children reach 21 years of age, they are no longer considered immediate relatives under the INA. Thus, instead of being entitled to admission without

numerical limitation, the U.S. citizen's sons or daughters are placed in the back of the line for one of the INS's backlogged family preference categories of immigrants. This can be particularly difficult when there are just over 23,000 family-first preference visas available each year to the adult, unmarried sons and daughters of citizens and a waiting list which at times has been in excess of over 90,000 people. It is not uncommon for people to wait on this waiting list for years.

The Senate expanded the bill to cover other situations where alien children lose immigration benefits by ''aging-out'' as a result of INS processing delays. The Senate amendment expands age-out protection to cover:

CHILDREN OF PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Under current law, when a child of a permanent resident turns 21, he or she goes from the second preference ''A'' waiting list to the second preference ''B'' waiting list, which is much longer.

CHILDREN OF FAMILY AND EMPLOYER-SPONSORED IMMIGRANTS AND DIVERSITY LOTTERY WINNERS

Under current law, when an alien receives permanent residence as a preference-visa recipient or a winner of the diversity lottery, a minor child receives permanent residence at the same time. After the child turns 21, the parent would have to apply for him or her to be put on the second preference ''B'' waiting list.

CHILDREN OF ASYLEES AND REFUGEES

Under current law, when an alien receives asylum or is granted refugee status, a minor child receives permanent residence at the same time as the parent. After the child turns 21, the parent would have to apply for him or her to be put on the second preference ''B'' waiting list.

The Senate amendment also fixes an anomaly in our immigration laws. Under current law, when a permanent resident naturalizes who has sponsored adult sons and daughters for preference visas, they move from the second preference ''B'' category (for the adult sons and daughters of permanent residents) to the first preference category (for the adult sons and daughters of citizens).

Normally, the wait for a first preference visa is much shorter than the wait for a second preference ''B'' visa. However, currently this is not the case for the sons and daughters of immigrants from the Philippines. The line actually gets longer for the sons and daughters when the parent naturalizes. This outcome is caused by two factors: (1) no one country can receive more than a certain percentage of visas in family-preference categories, and (2) there is a relatively higher demand among naturalized citizens from the Philippines for preference visas for their adult sons and daughters than there is among permanent residents from the Philippines. In any event, it is certainly unfortunate that immigrants are in effect being penalized for becoming citizens. The Senate amendment provides relief by allowing an adult son or daughter of a naturalized citizen who has already been sponsored for permanent residence to choose not to be transferred from the second preference ''B'' category to the first preference category.

This bill will solve the ''age out'' problem without displacing others who have been waiting patiently in other visa categories by allowing the child to use the date at the time the date of the parent's application. I would like to thank our Subcommittee Chairman, Congressman GEORGE GEKAS and Chairman SENSENBRENNER for moving this matter through the Congress. I look forward to further bi-partisan agreements in the future.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I introduced H.R. 1209, the ''Child Status Protection Act'', in March of 2001 along with SHEILA JACKSON LEE. I was moved by stories of the children of U.S. citizens, constituents of my own and of other members, who were being punished because of the inability of the INS to process applications for adjustment of status to permanent residency in a timely manner.

I am gratified to see us today on the verge of passing this bill for a second time and sending it to President Bush for his signature. I want to thank Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN for all her help in getting this bill passed by the Senate and for her efforts to make it even better.

Aliens who are eligible to receive an immigrant visa and who are in the United States are eligible to adjust to permanent resident status with the INS. However, the adjustment of status process has become a black hole. Almost a million adjustment of status applications are pending and the consequent processing delay can last up to three years. For the children of U.S. citizens, such delay can have major consequences.

An unlimited number of visas are available each year for the minor children of U.S. citizens, who are considered immediate relatives. However, a finite number of visas are available for the adult children of U.S. citizens.

The date at which the age of a child is measured is the date their adjustment of status application is processed—not the date that an immigrant visa petition was filed on their behalf. Thus, with the INS taking up to three years to process applications, children who were under 21 when their petitions were filed may find themselves over 21 by the time their applications are processed. When a child of a U.S. citizen ''ages out'' by turning 21, the child automatically shifts from the immediate relative category to the family first preference category. This puts him or her at the end of long waiting list for a visa.

Because demand for first preference visas far exceeds the number of visas available each year, petitions are processed in the order they were filed. For applicants from most countries, the wait for a family first preference visa is about seven years, but for applicants from Mexico or the Philippines, the wait can be much longer. This is in addition to the time it takes INS to process he adjustment of status application.

H.R. 1209, ''the Child Status Protection Act'', allows the children of U.S. citizens whose visa petitions were filed before they reached 21, but turn 21 before their adjustment of status applications are processed, to adjust status without having to wait for years. Pursuant to the bill, they will still be considered minor children of U.S. citizens, thus avoiding the first preference backlog.

This bill protects the children of American citizens whose opportunity to receive a visa quickly has been lost because of INS delays. It will also apply to those rare cases where a child ''ages out'' overseas during the usually more expeditious State Department visa processing.

The bill was modified in the Senate to provide relief to other children who lose out when the INS takes too long to process their adjustment of status applications—such as the children of permanent residents and of asylees and refugees. I want to commend Senator FEINSTEIN for these changes.

The bill will also benefit Philippine immigrants who become naturalized citizens. For some of them, naturalization now means that they will have to wait longer to reunite with their adult children. Our complex immigration laws and the law of supply and demand currently lead to the odd result that the waiting list is longer for the adult child of a naturalized citizen from the Philippines than for the adult child of a permanent resident from the Philippines. As a result, Filipino permanent residents with adult children are being punished for becoming citizens of the United States. H.R. 1209 sets things right by simply allowing the adult children to choose to stay in the shorter line.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1209.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1209.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONFERRING HONORARY CITIZENSHIP ON THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate joint resolution (S.J. Res. 13) conferring honorary citizenship of the United States on Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, also known as Marquis de Lafayette, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S.J. RES. 13

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roche Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, is proclaimed posthumously to be an honorary citizen of the United States of America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S.J. Res. 13.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?